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AUTHOR Griffith, William S.
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ABSTRACT

To determine the posture of adult/continuing education (ACE) graduate programs, a questionnaire was developed. The questionnaire first provided comparative data for ascertaining the number of faculty members and students in ACE departments and in the entire colleges of education for autumn of 1973 and 1978 and second provided information on faculty members' perceptions of change since 1973 in the level of influence their departments enjoyed within their respective colleges of education, past and predicted changes in these levels, factors affecting the levels, and related program characteristics and changes. Of seventy-three institutions (members of the Commission of the Professors of Adult Education) surveyed, twenty-seven responded. A few selected findings are as follow: (1) the median number of full-time equivalent faculty members in ACE increased from two to three between 1973 and 1978; (2) fifteen respondents reported status increases for ACE departments over the last five years; most frequently cited evidence was increased involvement in important groups; (3) three factors identified as most significant in increasing ACE departments' status and influence since 1973 were increasing faculty quality, student enrollment, and program quality; and (4) in general, respondents reported an increase in numerical importance and influence for ACE departments over the last five to ten years. (CSS)

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The Changing Status of Adult/Continuing Education Graduate Programs
(Report of the Ad Hoc Committee on University Related Politics
and Adult Education Graduate Programs*)

In May, 1978, the Chairman of the Commission of the Professors of Adult Education appointed a 3-member ad hoc Committee on University Related Politics and Adult Education Graduate Programs. The charge to the Committee stated that "Members of the Commission of the Professors of Adult Education express great concern over their acceptance by their colleges and we need to find out what kind of acceptance is given departments of adult and continuing education generally. There seems to be a need to find out the ratio between the numbers of students in our programs and the number of students in the colleges of education at each university. Unless we truly know the posture of our programs in North America vis-a-vis the institution and the number and kinds of F.T.E.'s and graduates our departments generate, we really do not know the nature of our efforts and will continue to concern ourselves with marginality."

With this guidance the members of the Committee began drafting questionnaires independently and then exchanged the drafts, with the chairman being given the responsibility of synthesizing a single questionnaire based on the drafts devised by each of the members. The resulting synthesis was then sent back to the members of the Committee for suggestions and approvals. Letters and telephone calls were used to communicate among the Committee members, resulting in a questionnaire which the Committee approved by July 28.

Because of a lack of time and financial resources, the Committee did not attempt to send a questionnaire to every institution in the United States and Canada which might be offering graduate programs in adult education even though by omitting this step in the data collection the Committee knew that they were limiting the generalizability of the findings. The Chairman of the Commission of the Professors of Adult Education provided a mailing list of 73 programs, all of which were believed to be represented in the membership of the Commission. Questionnaires were mailed to all 73 institutions on July 31 with a request that they return the questionnaire by September 20. As of Monday, October 15 (the day before the Canadian postal strike began), responses had been received from 27 of the institutions, a 37.0% response rate.

The names of the institutions which returned questionnaires are given in Table 1. No apparent geographical bias in willingness to respond is reflected in the table. The reasons for the relatively low response rate are not known.

* Prepared by the Committee consisting of George F. Aker, Florida State University, Clive C. Veri, Northern Illinois University, and William S. Griffith, chairman, University of British Columbia with the assistance of Grant S. Clarke, Research Assistant, Adult Education Department, University of British Columbia.

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TABLE 1 Institutions Which Responded to the July 31 Questionnaire

1. Arizona State University
 2. Boston University
 3. Colorado State University
 4. Cornell University
 5. Florida Atlantic University
 6. George Washington University
 7. Indiana University
 8. Iowa State University
 9. Montclair State College
 10. North Carolina State University
 11. Northern Illinois University
 12. Rutgers University
 13. State University of New York, Buffalo¹
 14. University of Arkansas
 15. University of British Columbia
 16. University of California, Los Angeles
 17. University of Connecticut
 18. University of Georgia
 19. University of Guelph²
 20. University of Illinois, Urbana
 21. University of Michigan
 22. University of Nebraska, Lincoln
 23. University of North Carolina
 24. University of South Florida
 25. University of Wisconsin, Madison
 26. Washington State University
 27. Unknown³
-

¹Program phased out in 1975 "because of budget cutbacks."

²Respondent did not complete the questionnaire because he felt that his extension program "does not really fit into the category of Adult/Continuing Education programs per se."

³Partially completed but unidentified questionnaire.

The questionnaires consisted of two sections, the first asking for factual numerical information and the second calling for each respondent's perceptions of the changing status of the adult/continuing education department within the institution. Tabulations of these responses are presented in the two sections with an interpretation following.

SECTION ONE - NUMERICAL DATA

Numerical data were requested on number of faculty members and students in the adult/continuing education departments and in the entire colleges of education for the autumn of 1973 and 1978. The use of a ten year comparison was abandoned by the questionnaire designers because of their belief that a number of programs were less than ten years old.

Faculty

Table 2 provides an overview of the numbers of faculty members at five years ago, and at present, and estimates of changes in the next two years.

TABLE 2 Changes in Numbers of Faculty Members in ACE Departments and in Colleges of Education of Responding Institutions

		1973	1978
Number of Full-Time Equivalent Faculty in ACE	RESPONSES	22	22
	MEDIAN	2	3
	RANGE	.5-15	1.0-14.5
Number of Faculty Members in Education other than ACE	RESPONSES	19	19
	MEDIAN	105	92
	RANGE	0-368	0-349
Number of Faculty Members Expected to be Hired in ACE in 2 years	RESPONSES	N.A.	21
	MEDIAN	N.A.	0
	RANGE	N.A.	0-7
Number of Faculty Members in Education other than ACE Expected to be Hired in 2 years	RESPONSES	N.A.	21
	MEDIAN	N.A.	0
	RANGE	N.A.	(-14)-15

Twelve institutions reported an intention to hire between 3.5 and 5.0 F.T.E. faculty members in ACE in the next two years. The kinds of qualifications sought and the number of individuals in each category are shown in Table 3.

TABLE 3 Numbers of Persons and Kinds of Qualifications Sought by Institutions which Anticipate an Increase in ACE Staff in Five Years

Number of Individuals	General Area	Number of Individuals	Special Area
3	Adult continuing education	2	Research - continuing professional education
1	Continuing education sociology	1	Recreation - leisure education
1.5	A.B.E.	2	Community development education
1	Community college education	1	Business and industry
1	Extension education	1.5	Educational gerontology
1	Resource utilization and dissemination products and practices		
1	Community agency program development monitoring A.B.E./G.E.D./E.S.L.		
6 part-time	Older adult career/education/ coping counsellors - retired persons		
1	Adult higher education/ research		
1	Doctorate in ACE with learning specialty		
1	Research methodology		
1	Women's continuing education		

One measure of the potential impact of professors of ACE within their universities is the number of class sessions or seminars they conduct in non ACE courses directed by non ACE faculty. The twenty institutions responding to this item reported an increase from a median level of 6.5 sessions in 1976-77 to a median level of 10 in 1977-78, while the range increased from 0 to 100 sessions in 1976-77 to 0-178 sessions in 1977-78.

The changing relative numerical importance of the ACE department faculty within the college of education is shown in Table 4.

TABLE 4
Changes in the Relative Numerical Importance of the Adult/
Continuing Education Faculty in Relation to their Respective
Colleges of Education, 1973 - 1978

institution	ACE Faculty Members as a Percentage of Other Colleges of Education Faculty	
	1973	1978
1	1%	2%
2	1%	4%
3	1%	1%
4	1%	3%
5	3%	4%
6	3%	6%
7	0	3%
8	1%	1%
9	0	1%
10	2%	3%
11	2%	5%
12	16%	18%
13	0	1%
14	8%	9%
15	N.A.	23%
16	1%	1%
17	1%	4%
18	2%	3%
19	7%	11%

All 19 institutions which responded to the question experienced growth. In most cases the colleges of education were experiencing an absolute decline in the number of faculty members in departments other than adult/continuing education. Accordingly, the apparent rate of increase on an absolute basis may have been smaller than is indicated by the relative percentages shown.

Students

The Committee sought to measure the number of graduate students in different graduate programs within institutions, their relative numerical importance within their respective colleges of education, the numbers of students taking one or more courses in ACE who were not pursuing a major or minor in ACE, and the approximate number of individuals whose applications for admission had been denied as of the autumn terms, 1973 and 1978.

Table 5 shows the number of institutions responding to each item, the numbers of students at each graduate level in ACE and in other education departments for the autumn terms, 1973 and 1978.

TABLE 5 Numbers of Students at each Graduate Level in ACE Departments and in Other Education Departments, Autumn, 1973 and 1978

Program	Adult/Continuing Education Majors		Approximate Number ACE Minors or Cognates		Approximate Number Non-ACE Majors in Colleges of Education	
	1973	1978	1973	1978	1973	1978
M.A., M.Ed., M.S.						
Responses	21	21	15	17	10	11
Median	25	65	4	12	319	343
Range	0-137	10-191	0-32	0-56	50-1308	144-1744
C.A.S., Dip., Ed.D.						
Responses	14	14	6	7	4	5
Median	3	6	0	3	119	106
Range	0-20	0-48	0-22	2-30	20-160	25-150
Ed.D., Ph.D.						
Responses	16	16	14	14	8	9
Median	40	43	2	7	168	132
Range	0-120	4-140	0-17	2-39	60-950	100-1000

The relative numerical importance of the ACE majors in relation to the total number of graduate students in their respective colleges of education at the beginning of the autumn term in 1973 and 1978 is shown in percentages in Table 6. In all but two institutions, the numerical importance increased. In the two institutions which showed a decreased percentage, the actual numbers of ACE graduate students increased by 43 in one case and by 47 in the other; the decreased percentages were caused by a more rapid rate of increase in education departments other than ACE than in these two ACE departments.

TABLE 6 Changes in the Relative Numerical Importance of the Adult/Continuing Education Majors in Relation to the Total Number of Graduate Students in their Respective Colleges of Education, 1973 - 1978

Institution	ACE Majors as a Percentage of Other College of Education Graduate Students	
	1973	1978
1	35%	37%
2	3%	5%
3	7%	9%
4	3%	8%
5	11%	22%
6	1%	5%
7	110%	87%
8	2%	10%
9	40%	24%
10	0	7%
11	6%	7%
12	N.A.	4%
13	13%	29%

The second index of the importance of the ACE departments is the number of students who are not seeking degrees in ACE who took courses given by the ACE departments. Eighteen institutions reported a median of 28 non-ACE majors taking one or more ACE courses in 1972-73 with a range of 0 to 261. Twenty institutions reported a median number of 56 non-ACE majors taking one or more ACE courses in 1977-78 with a range of 10 to 296.

The third index of the strength of the ACE departments is the number of students whose applications for admission to ACE graduate programs were rejected. Thirteen institutions reported that they had denied admission to a median of 5 applicants in 1972-73 with a range from 0 to 126. Eighteen institutions reported that they had denied admission to a median of 20 students in 1977-78 with a range from 3 to 151.

SECTION TWO - PERCEPTIONS OF CHANGE

In the second section of the questionnaire questions were asked to determine how members of the ACE departments regarded the level of influence the departments enjoyed within their respective colleges of education, past and predicted changes in these levels, factors affecting the levels, and related characteristics and changes within the programs.

Respondents were asked to describe the influence which ACE faculty, singly and collectively, have in their institution's governing structures as reflected in such factors as elected memberships or appointments to significant committees, access to decision makers and ability to obtain resources and make changes in the ACE program. They were also asked to indicate how the situation had changed in the past five years and to predict the changes likely to occur in the next five years.

Fifteen respondents gave one more more of the following kinds of evidence of increased influence over the past five years:

1. 13 cited elected memberships or appointments to significant committees and councils
2. 2 mentioned improved access to decision makers
3. 2 reported that changes in the college administration had increased their department's status
4. 1 said that obtaining federal funding for departmental projects had increased their department's status.

Four respondents said their departments enjoyed higher status today than five years ago although they gave no specific evidence. Four commented on access to resources with two describing it as just adequate and two as good. Eight predicted a gain in departmental influence in the next five years with two predicting a slight increase and six anticipating a significant increase. Only one respondent reported a lack of departmental influence within his institution because of "under-representation on important committees." Overall those who responded to this question indicated that their ACE departments were enjoying an improved level of influence within their institutions.

Twenty-one respondents provided answers to the question of the ACE faculty's feeling of influence or lack thereof both within their college or school and within their institution as a whole.

One reported feeling powerless because ACE is viewed as a marginal activity of the college of education.

One said that the ACE department was equally influential as the other departments within their institution.

Two said that influence was dependent upon the individuals rather than the department as a whole.

Two reported having considerable influence but feeling limited because of a lack of resources and a policy of zero growth rate for the staff.

Four felt influential within the college of education but less so with other disciplines and colleges of the institution.

Twelve reported a feeling of being significantly influential for one or more of the following reasons:

Increased entrance standards:	1 institution
Revised "research package":	1 institution
Involvement in important groups - committees, councils:	6 institutions
National reputation in ACE:	1 institution
Growth of budget and staff:	3 institutions
Demand for graduates of the program:	1 institution
Increasing ACE student enrollment:	1 institution

Table 7 is a summary of the three most important factors which have affected the status of the ACE department and program since 1973 and the number of departments which listed each factor as first, second, or third in importance. Twenty-two departments responded to this question.

TABLE 7 Frequency of Mention and Ranking of Importance of the Three Most Significant Factors Which Have Affected the Status of ACE Departments Since 1973 (n=22)

Frequency of Mention	Factor	Number of Institutions Ranking as		
		First	Second	Third
11	Quality of ACE faculty	5	4	2
9	Increased student enrollments in ACE department	2	5	2
5	Quality of ACE program	2	1	2
4	Increased prominence of ACE as a field	1	1	2
3	Leadership of chairman	2	0	1
3	Declining enrollments in other areas of education	0	2	1
3	Influence of the dean of education	3	0	0
2	Respect of colleagues in other education departments	0	1	1
2	Acquiring authority to award the doctorate	0	1	1
2	Reorganization of the department	1	1	0
2	Ability to offer innovative programs	0	0	2
2	Ability of program graduates to find good jobs	1	1	0
2	Administrative support	1	1	0
1	Raised admission standards	0	1	0
1	Integration of PhD committee with other colleges	0	0	1
1	Recognition from state department of education	0	0	1
1	Declining budgets for the college of education	0	1	0
1	Emphasis on and interest in educational gerontology	0	0	1

Frequency of Mention	Factor	Number of Institutions Ranking as		
		First	Second	Third
1	International recognition through service	1	0	0
1	Increased financial support from the university	0	1	0
1	Young people looking for more options in education	0	0	1
1	State grants	1	0	0
1	Greater number of older students	0	0	1
1	Greater value of interpersonal skill in all pursuits	0	1	0
1	Increasing importance of small group work	1	0	0
1	Community education center	0	1	0
1	Adult education projects by the federal government	1	0	0
1	Ability of students	0	0	1
1	Effective teaching-learning climate	0	0	1

Table 8 depicts the respondents' opinions of the extent their departments have gained status in the last ten years as perceived by six reference groups. The greatest gain in status for the departments was seen as within the college of education though it is reported that almost as much gain was seen with regard to administrators both within education and for the entire university.

TABLE 8 Respondents' Opinions of the Extent their ACE Departments Have Gained in Status as Perceived by Selected Reference Groups (n=19)

Reference Group	ACE Departments Gain in Status				
	Unknown	None	Little	Moderate	Much
1. Colleagues in other departments of the college of education	0	0	2	3	14
2. Colleagues in extension or university continuing education	0	1	1	9	8
3. Colleagues in arts and science	4	6	5	3	1
4. Colleagues in professional schools	0	1	5	6	7
5. Members of the administration of college/school and entire university	1	0	2	4	12
6. Personnel in state or provincial departments of education	3	5	1	1	9

Respondents were asked to identify any changes that have occurred over the past ten years regarding the placements of their ACE graduates in positions of responsibility in the field. The results are shown in Table 9.

TABLE 9 Changes in Placement of ACE Graduates in Positions of Responsibility in the Field Since 1968 (n=21)

Change	Number of Institutions Reporting
Higher responsibility jobs	4
More placements	3
Demand for graduates exceeds number being graduated	2
Shift from extension to:	
(a) community colleges	2
(b) medical health professions	2
(c) government	1
Increase in university faculty positions	1
Increased placement in community colleges	1
Program too new to establish patterns	1
Most graduates already working and do not need placement	2
No great change	4

Although nearly all departments reported an increase in the number of ACE graduate students it is unclear what factors accounted for the increase. Table 10 shows the changes in recruiting reported by 21 respondents.

TABLE 10 Numbers of Respondents Reporting Specific Changes in Student Recruitment Practices Since 1968 (n=21)

Change	Number of Institutions Reporting
None	10
Increased use of promotional literature	5
Visibility and prestige of faculty	2
Students as informal recruiters	2
More "aggressive"	2
More precise needs assessment of target clientele	1
Expanded national and international involvement	1
More involvement with community colleges	1
More financial support available to students	1
Greater reliance on reputation	1
Higher scholastic requirements	1

Nearly half (48%) reported that no change had been made in recruitment practices, and indicated that whatever had been the practice in the past was being continued. Another 48% reported changes which would be expected to yield an increasing number of applicants while only 2% mentioned that scholastic requirements had been raised, a change that was associated with an intended shift toward increased quality of the program and increased status of the department.

Twenty respondents identified the following changes in admission requirements over the past decade: no changes, 10; slightly more rigorous, 2; higher selectivity with cutbacks in admissions, 1; far more rigorous (high GPA, GRE scores, Miller Analogies and experience), 6; and more liberal with less emphasis on general education background, 1. Fully 50% reported having made no change, 5% had become more liberal, while 45% claimed that the admissions criteria had been raised.

The last structured item in the questionnaire asked for the relative priority which had been assigned to eight possible functions of ACE departments ten years ago and at present. Eighteen institutions provided the data which are summarized in Table 11.

TABLE 11 Numbers of Institutions Rating Relative Priorities to Eight Selected Functions, 1968 and 1978 (n=18)

Function	Number of Institutions Rating Priority Level								Total Responses
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	
Preparation of adult educators via on-campus graduate degree programs									
1968	12	1	1				1		15
1978	13	2				1			16
Preparation of adult educators via off-campus graduate degree programs									
1968		1	1	2	1	2	3	4	14
1978	1	2	1	3	1	3	1	4	16
In-service staff development via non-credit activities									
1968		3	3	1	1	1	4	1	14
1978		2	1	1	5		5	1	15
In-service staff development via credit courses									
1968	1	3	1	3		5		1	14
1978		3	2	2	1	5	2		15
Basic research									
1968		1	3	3	1	2	2	3	15
1978	1	2	3	3	2		1	4	16
Applied research									
1968		3	4	2	3	1	2		15
1978		5	6	2	1	1	1		16
Technical assistance to selected agencies or client groups									
1968	2	3	2	3	3		2	1	16
1978	1	1	4	2	1	2	4	3	18
Publishing and communicating information about the field									
1968		1	2	3	5	1	1	1	14
1978		4	1	3	3	5		1	17

Without any doubt, the respondents' assessments lead to the conclusion that the highest ranking function performed by ACE departments is the preparation of adult educators through on-campus graduate degree programs, ten years ago and at present. Although there is a remarkable amount of scatter in the frequencies of the cells in the table and no clear pattern is evident, a rough weighting of the responses indicates that the lowest ranking priority overall for 1978 is the function of providing technical assistance to selected agencies or client groups.

The final item on the questionnaire was an invitation to the respondents to add any further comments which will help the committee to understand the reasons for any changes which may have occurred or which are currently occurring in the status of their ACE programs and departments within colleges of education and within the institution as a whole. This open-ended question produced a number of responses which do not readily lend themselves to summarization. An edited tabulation of the responses is provided in Table 12.

TABLE 12 Reasons Given by 14 Respondents for Changes Which Have Occurred or are Occurring in the Status of their ACE Programs or Departments

Reason	Number of times mentioned
Demand for and status of graduates of program	3
Better relationship with graduate school	3
Quality of staff and extensiveness of their involvement	2
Decline of other education areas	2
Major emphasis in developing specialized program areas in addition to core curriculum	2
National and international recognition of faculty, giving high visibility to program	2
Expanded programs and enrollments	2
Strong administrative support	2
Greatly improved relationship with practitioners of adult education through functioning of field advisory committee	2
Size of staff decreased due to terminated federal projects while program enrollments grew steadily	1
Emphasis on community education: graduate degrees available in both adult education and community education	1
Demise of other adult education graduate programs at other state institutions, hence enhancement of ours	1
Reorganization of the department	1
Unrealistic restrictive admissions criteria for adults limited program expansion	1
Adult education designated as a major focus of Open Learning Institute by Provincial Ministry of Education	1
Movement toward human resource development and away from public school adult education	1
Favourable environmental factors and change in general status of ACE	1
Social science research viewed as "second-class" by the institution	1

The responses shown in Table 12 do not reveal any significant agreement among the respondents regarding explanatory factors in addition to those already covered in previous questions.

INTERPRETATIONS

The Ad Hoc Committee on University Related Politics and Adult Education Graduate Programs of the Commission of Professors of Adult Education sent 73 questionnaires to adult/continuing education (ACE) departments in institutions in Canada and the United States which were represented in the Commission membership for the purpose of assessing both numerical and perceived changes in the status of ACE departments within their colleges of education. Twenty-seven institutions (37.0%) returned questionnaires in varying states of completeness. No geographical bias in willingness to respond was apparent.

The following are selected findings from the questionnaire data:

1. The median number of full-time equivalent faculty members in ACE increased from 2 to 3 between 1973 and 1978.
2. The median number of faculty members in colleges of education decreased from 105 to 92 between 1973 and 1978.
3. Twelve institutions reported an expectation of hiring between 0.5 and 5.0 full-time equivalent faculty members in ACE departments while the total number of new faculty members expected to be hired in other education departments ranged from -14 to +15.
4. Nineteen institutions reported that the ACE department faculty had become a larger percentage of the entire education faculty in the last 5 years.
5. The relative numerical importance of ACE graduate students vis-a-vis all education graduate students increased in all but two of the 13 institutions providing this data. In those two cases the number of ACE students increased also but not as rapidly as non-ACE students in education.
6. Fifteen respondents reported an increase in status for the ACE department over the last five years and cited evidence to support their perceptions. Increased involvement in important groups, committees and councils was the most frequently cited evidence of increased influence.
7. Three factors were identified as most significant in affecting the increase in status and influence of the ACE departments since 1973: (a) increased quality of the ACE faculty, (b) increased student enrollment in the ACE department, and (c) increase in the quality of the ACE program.
8. The respondents felt that their increase in status had been greatest as seen by their colleagues in other departments of the college of education and least as seen by colleagues in arts and sciences.
9. Changes in the placement of ACE graduates since 1968 showed no clear pattern.
10. Although 48% of the respondents said they had made no changes in recruitment practices over the last ten years, another 48% identified various changes to increase applications. Only one respondent cited high scholastic requirements for admission as a change in recruitment practices.
11. There was a remarkable level of agreement among 18 institutions regarding the priority ranking of functions performed by their departments with regard to the most important function only--the preparation of adult educators in campus-based graduate degree programs. Apparently the lowest ranked of the 8 functions listed was providing technical assistance to selected agencies or client groups. The importance of applied research was seen as somewhat higher than basic research though neither appeared to be regarded as falling in higher than about third place.

12. In general, the respondents reported both an increase in numerical importance and in influence for ACE departments over the last 5 to 10 years. If the responding institutions are approximately representative of ACE departments in North America, then ACE as a field is indeed in an enviable position within colleges of education.

It is possible or even likely that the departments which responded were those with the most resources and with the greatest influence. What the picture might have been had the other 63% of the departments responded cannot be determined, but it is likely that the complete data would have been somewhat less attractive. Nevertheless it is clear that ACE departments in at least 20 institutions are in enviably good health and are exhibiting positive expectations for their future.

Copies of the entire report may be obtained by writing to William S. Griffith, Professor of Adult Education, University of British Columbia, 5760 Toronto Road, Vancouver, B.C., Canada, V6T 1L2.